



## An Overview of Patterns of Food Consumption: A Sociological Appraisal

**Mohammad Taghi Sheykhi\***

*Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Mohammad Taghi Sheykhi, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.

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### Abstract

Sociologically speaking, patterns of food consumption have highly changed all over the world because of industrialization, urbanization, the resultant social, economic, and cultural change. Following such a great change, more and more boys and girls did school, girls got jobs and openings which entirely changed their lifestyles and patterns of food consumption. Before that, they depended on limited home-made foods. Jobs by the girls/women gave them more opportunities-giving them more food options. Such a change first emerged in industrial world, and then gradually and to a lesser extent appeared in the developing world. Currently, McDonaldization in food industry is rapidly spreading even in developing countries. Large numbers of young women do not even have the skills of cooking/preparing food at home. New patterns of food consumption have largely revolutionized/expanded the food industries outside home-employing many people. Judging on such a phenomenon/culture is not sociologically an easy task. However, changing dietary patterns and meeting the relevant needs should always be on the agenda of social and economic planners.

**Keywords:** Law of England; Urbanization; Industrialization; Food price effects; Food consumption

### Introduction

Because of the global world change, many patterns of food consumption have changed, and are changing as well. People everywhere are using more food items, more services, more medicines, accessing longer life expectancy, having more leisure time and the like. Change in consumption patterns first occurred in the industrial world, and then followed by the developing countries. Such countries facing high population growth rate, are currently trying to access industrial/technological development to be able to meet their population's needs of all sorts. As the present population in developing countries have become educated, they have turned into more consumption in food, medicines, and more other services. People in the bipolar world today are highly under the pressure of food shortage in the developing countries, and the scenario will intensify from 2030 onward. Developing countries with increasing prices, and shortage of resources are not often able to easily

secure what they need including their medicaments. Developed world countries are generally more comfortable in sectors of food and medicines due to sophisticated insurance systems. Increasing young population with the new patterns and values adopted in the Third World countries, are more consumptive as compared with the older generations. Such a scenario creates a lot of challenges for the countries concerned. Increasing world urban population will further complicate the food patterns with reference to the developing countries. The emergence of an agro-food geography that seeks to examine issues along the food chain, or within the systems of food provision, derives in part from strengthening of political economy approaches in the 1980s [1]. However, water stress, deforestation, and erosion are leading to loss of arable land [2]. Similarly, agricultural practices use the bulk of the Earth's fresh water-up to 70 per cent-and those numbers are predicted to rise by 50-100 per cent by 2025 [3]. As projected, the world population will rise to

over 10 billion by the year 2050. It is worth noting that the unprecedented population will face shortage of food items for many by that year [4].

As the economic world is constantly changing, so is the pattern of food consumption around the world; Even the previously predicted dietary patterns of industrial societies are changing. One of the topics of sociology is economic sociology in which the relationship between human beings and different social groups with economics in its general sense is measured; Food supply, food production, food patterns, and the like are among the topics that should be considered in economic sociology and should be on the agenda of planners. This article deals with how and quantitatively and qualitatively assess food needs as one of the aspects of economic sociology. It is noteworthy that the future of world food production, food consumed in developing and developed countries, in both groups of countries are changing dramatically in terms of type and quantity. Following the approach of different social groups, both urban and rural, rich, and poor, food consumption in terms of quantity and quality has experienced many changes in recent years. Therefore, social, and economic planners should always look to the issue of food, both its production and consumption, in a forward-looking way. In general, as people get richer, they turn less to carbohydrate foods, including rice, bread, potatoes, and so on, and more to meat and fats, which in turn provide the basis for assessing food demand for the future. Therefore, by changing dietary patterns, meeting the relevant needs should always be on the agenda of social and economic planners.

### Methods of Research

Methodology used in the present article is of qualitative type. In that, various paradigms have been used to find out about the facts regarding pandemics during the history. Qualitative research usually studies people, events, or areas in their natural settings. In finding facts for the research, the researcher engaged in careful data collection and thoughtful analysis of what was relevant. In the documentary research applied for the present research, printed and written materials were widely regarded. The research was performed as a qualitative library-type in which the researcher had to refer to the relevant and related sources. In the current research, various documents were thoroughly investigated, and the needful inferences were made. The data fed by the investigator in the present article is hopefully reliable. Though literature on pandemics

is very limited, yet the author tried to investigate many different resources to elicit the necessary information to build up the text.

### Richness of population and food

While the amount of food consumed in individual countries may increase as their populations become richer, the range of foods they consume is changing. Human societies, different from non-human societies, seek to become rich, generally seeking more food, more food diversity, and so on. Therefore, countries should always pay more attention to their nutrition process to improve their economy and increase food resources. This is clearly the case in pre-industrialized countries. The mentioned situation has led to more economic prosperity, more health of people and more economic interactions. Less developed societies, on the other hand, have less food diversity due to the economic weakness of these societies. As nations get richer, they spend more on food. Australia, for example, with a per capita GDP of \$ 65,000, has an estimated per capita food cost of about \$ 3,650 per year. Conversely, poor countries such as Zimbabwe in Africa, with a per capita GDP of less than \$ 1,000 per year, spend about \$ 400 per year on food [5]. From the point of view of economic sociology, such countries have a long way to go to meet the food needs of their different strata. Just over 1.2 billion people in the world are still in economic straits and food needs.

As income increases, the total amount of food required will stabilize and increase to some extent, while the range of foods consumed will change toward the patterns of meat, dairy, and vegetable products. Following the change in the culture of human populations, consumption patterns have also changed to some extent (to a large extent) compared to other organisms. Nutrition culture is reflected in the context of religion, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations [6]. Therefore, social planners should always think about accessing more food sources, including plant, dairy, animal, and the like. Likewise, as urbanization expands and cultural and consumption patterns converge, food demand is increasing more than ever before. If planning and management in the food production sector does not go well, communities face many shortcomings that affect economic norms and economic balance; That is, it leads to price increases and the like; That is, a phenomenon that has many social effects.

Following the economic recovery of the people, the consumption of basic foods changes to a variety of diets. With increasing

purchasing power following economic recovery, diversification of consumption as well as change in food consumption appears in different forms in societies. Optimistically and positively, this type of change leads to better health and ultimately longer life expectancy of the population. Studies on nutrition and longevity in Japan show a balanced intake of legumes, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, soy, and the like in that country between the population of 75-45 years; That is, substances that reduce the risk of death between them [7]. In the past, however, in the face of economic constraints, people in society generally relied on basic food-stuffs. However, following the economic growth of societies and the greater purchasing power of members of society, more food products were placed in the production cycle, and thus the economic movement of production, distribution and consumption changed. As increased consumption of meat, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables is likely to increase by 2050, the necessary predictions need to be made. Following population growth, urbanization, consumer diversity, turn to vegetables, plant materials, etc., economic sociologists must always make the necessary forward-looking as far as production and consumption cycles are concerned. However, the weakness of the forecast itself of many economic anomalies such as food shortages, rising prices, disruption of supply and demand and the like is not unexpected. With the world's population growing to more than 9.3 billion by 2050, predicting food in its various forms becomes very necessary and inevitable. Otherwise, from a sociological point of view, societies will face many challenges.

At the same time, there is a two-pronged change in consumption pattern: the first is the increase in calories, and the second is the move toward higher-calorie proteins. Following the above discussions, one of the motivations for changing the pattern of food consumption, while increasing the intake of food calories is more, in part, many people want to achieve certain food intakes by changing their food consumption pattern. In the present age, and especially in urban communities, such changes in dietary patterns are abundant and can be observed between different population groups.

### Food and the law of England

It is generally hypothesized that food consumption is subject to English law; That is, when people become richer, they spend less of their income on food, and instead spend it on other or different ways of increasing their income [8]. This hypothesis (English law) can be seen in many societies today, especially in urban communities. It is in such a way that people to a large extent increase their

income at the expense of non-food products and services, Such as entertainment, travel, sports services, leisure, clothing, and the like. This phenomenon today is not limited to industrial societies but has spread to other societies. The current of globalization, the emergence of communication networks and similar facilities, have created different economic methods, especially in urban communities.

In assessing the future consumption of countries, it should be borne in mind that spending less on food items means spending more on consumer goods. Many countries, due to economic cycles, manpower, as well as population growth, especially in urban areas, also do a lot of advertising in the field of consumption, consumer goods and the like; Just to keep the economy in various sectors active and stable. This movement generally affects people's consumption behavior, tastes, and desires. In other words, following this move, the way of life of the people of the society is always changing. Therefore, economic sociologists and social psychologists should always pay attention to this important movement and provide constructive and effective points of view to improve it.

What is certain is that in this movement, a decrease in demand in one group of food items means an increase in demand in other items. Changing economic status, access to more information, changing age structure, being urban or rural, and factors of this kind, each in turn reduce the demand for certain food items, and this is while people in the community turn to items and food. Another turns. Thus, the market of production and consumption is always changing under the influence of such patterns. These changes are more visible today than ever before among different strata. Likewise, the growth and development of medical advances and communications of this kind have a profound effect on changing eating patterns. Under the influence of these factors, more personal health has been created for people in different societies, and ultimately, these indicators have led to increased life expectancy in these societies.

The English law is more applicable to the demand for food in developed countries and shows a picture of it. As mentioned before, under this law, people do not consume more food to get rich but change the quality of their food; This is more common in developed countries than in less developed countries. Therefore, the life expectancy index in industrialized countries is much higher than non-industrialized countries; For example, in industrialized societies, life expectancy is in the range of more than 80 years, while in

non-industrial African countries, it rarely exceeds 50 years. Therefore, the factor of their economy and income play an important role in how they choose food, receive it and, as a result, achieve a higher quality of life. Economic sociology examines issues such as “food and quality of life” in detail.

For example, while in the UK the richest one-tenth of the population spends only 7% of their income on food, poor people spend 5 to 17% of their total income on food [9]. Thus, many poor sections and groups in society are under much greater pressure in terms of costs and livelihoods due to the lack of stable jobs on the one hand, and variable and weak incomes on the other. This has caused the poor in many countries to always feel more poverty and helplessness. This situation, today and while population growth continues in such societies, many have faced many economic hardships. Many forward-thinking economists have predicted the 1930s, thus warning food planners, agricultural institutions, and food producers of the future of population and food. Hence, communities in general and Third World societies need to have more control over population, food income and expenditure. Access to food is a central component of several welfare indicators in terms of security, health, or poverty [10].

In contrast, very poor countries spend between 30 and 90% of their income on food. Because per capita income in such countries is generally estimated at less than \$ 2 a day, most household income must always be spent on food. These conditions must withstand many deprivations related to housing, education, leisure, and other facilities. Hence, less developed societies need economic infrastructure, strengthening economic foundations, economic stability, and similar conditions. For example, while many developing societies are facing double-digit price increases, industrialized countries such as Japan reported economic inflation of 1% per year in 2014. In this way, financing food in industrial societies does not put much pressure on the citizens of the respective societies.

In assessing demand, the future Food of different strata, type and quality of food consumed are also discussed [11]. Today's societies, due to the continuous increase of their population and the influence of different strata of different communication networks, and the consequent change of patterns, need to be consumed more. Likewise, as different infrastructures such as health care, welfare services, and the like provide a greater chance of longevity for different people, economic planners must always be forward-looking in quantifying the growing food needs of such individuals. And they

mean quality in their plans. Also, increasing urbanization will lead to more competition in food consumption.

### Urbanization and food consumption pattern

While more than 60% of the world's population will be urbanized by 2020, by 2050 this is likely to increase to 70% [12]. In such a situation, while the manpower in the agricultural sector has been declining, and in contrast, following the forecast of an increasing population in urban areas, there is a greater demand for food. Economic and agricultural planners must always consider the production and supply of food in proportion to the increase in urban population and adapt it appropriately. Otherwise, many communities, especially the poorer ones, which are experiencing more population growth, will experience more food constraints and shortages in the coming decades. By 2030, more than half of Africa's population will be living in urban areas, according to Crouch and Ferrin [13], and this will create an invisible crisis in terms of urban food security.

While by 1960 less than a third of the world's population lived in urban areas, diet patterns were different. Such a picture of the population suggests that in the pre-1960s, when two-thirds or more of the world's population lived in rural areas, natural food production, food abundance and low prices were widespread within different societies. It is eye-catching. However, later (from 1960 onwards) it was also affected by the gradual expansion of urbanization of food production; In a way that the supply of food is not commensurate with its growing demand. This situation has also led to an increase in food prices; It has even led to malnutrition in some circumstances and among some people.

At that time (1960) one third of the world's urban population belonged to industrialized countries, while in the late 1990s industrial societies accounted for only one fifth of the world's urban population, which means a larger share, or 80% of the population. The world's urbanization today belongs to non-industrialized and developing countries. Such societies today face more food constraints, rising prices, and an imbalance between supply and demand in the food sector. This situation has led to malnutrition and malnutrition in many parts of the world, such as Africa; That is, a process that negatively affects new generations. Hence, developing countries face more social crises in the food sector.

Urban population growth in low- and middle-income developing countries is more challenging than urban population growth

in high-income countries, as well as the rate of rural population growth in developing countries [14]. In recent decades, many developing countries have sought to grow their populations on the one hand, and the lack of job opportunities in rural areas on the other, rather than urban areas. At the same time, industrial societies experienced less urban growth in the early stages of their economic-industrial development. This situation in developing societies today has led to problems with food, housing, employment, and the like for such immigrants. Therefore, developing societies today have a great need for urban management and planning. At the same time, these communities generally face a lack of financial and economic support. This is the situation in many African societies today. This situation has led to many cultural changes and changes in lifestyle [15].

At the same time, urban population growth in countries with a minimum annual development of more than 3% has been estimated in the last two decades compared to 1% in developed countries.

The high volume of urbanization and migration in such societies has even led to many psychological, educational, racial, and other problems. For example, large-scale migrations from rural China to urban areas in that country over the past 1.5 decades have left the children of such migrants, who often live-in rural areas, facing the disadvantages of their fathers' migration; That means a lot of psychological and educational problems for such children. On the other hand, children who have migrated with their parents to urban areas in that country themselves, with class gaps, differences in living standards between urban children, and recently migrated, and so on, which can be evaluated and analyzed socially and psychologically. This situation is now seen in many parts of Asia, including India and the Philippines.

**Food price effects**

Rising prices directly affect the poor; That is, both as producers and as consumers, and the impact that this increase will ultimately have on the economies of poor countries. The biggest effect of this

2007 - 2012	Beans	Dairy	Dried and processed foods	Oils and fats	Ready meals
China	14.2	11.5	13.8	14.1	10.3
India	27.4	17.4	18.9	17.7	15.6
Indonesia	18.9	12.2	15.1	13.4	7.9
Japan	2.8	1.2	-0.9	0.5	1.4
South Korea	6.1	5.3	-0.1	3.4	8
Hungary	2.3	5.7	5.6	7	2.8
Romania	11.4	11.2	5.1	5.5	3.9
Russia	11.9	14.8	11.4	11.3	10.8
Brazil	12.2	11.6	3.5	4.7	12.1
Mexico	7	5.3	8.7	5.7	5.6
Morocco	8.5	7.3	6.1	2.9	29.3
America	0.9	1.2	3.3	3.5	1
Germany	0.7	1.2	-2.4	1.1	0.9
Turkey	17.9	5	4.6	13.2	4.6
England	4	4.2	8	4.7	3.3
South Africa	11.2	9	15.2	9.7	12.6

**Table 1:** The trend of food consumption and its annual growth rate between years 2012-2007 in selected countries (%).

Source: Euro Monitor, Who Eats What: Identifying Int. Food Consumption Trends, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (2011).

price increase is probably on different levels of food consumption. According to forecasts, about 85% increase in demand for cereals and protein (meat) will occur in the coming years in less developed

countries. Likewise, increased consumption of ready-to-eat foods is closely related to women's employment, and ultimately rising food prices in less developed countries reduce living standards.

Such countries generally must endure constant economic pressures because of changing consumption patterns, declining food supply levels, and rising prices. At the same time, many different age groups face a shortage of nutrients, which results in a lack of food intake, malnutrition, and deprivation. According to forecasts, many developing societies by 2030 will face challenges and problems due to food shortages and rising prices; That is a phenomenon that the respective countries must deal with in advance.

## Conclusion

Food consumption is constantly increasing in modern time all over the world. That is happening while drought and shortage of water are appearing in many parts of the globe. As life expectancy is raising within all people, increasing people are currently living on the Earth. Besides food, they need medications and many more services, especially at ages 65 and over. The complicated situation is easily observed with special reference to the developing countries. World community needs food resources to provide sufficient food to the large volume of population living up to long ages. Due to the afore-mentioned situation, many people are migrating to the industrial countries to earn their livelihoods.

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